

## ISSUE SUMMARY:

Recognizing the shared and close environmental, economic and social links in North America, the United States and the Agency have a long history of environmental cooperation with our partners in Canada and Mexico trilaterally and bilaterally. The U.S., Canada and Mexico have worked together on the conservation and protection of shared watersheds; addressing transboundary pollution; aligning, where feasible, the environmental policies, practices, and regulatory actions affecting US business and citizens; and cooperating on growing environmental challenges and opportunities in North America.

## UPCOMING MILESTONES:

- Tijuana River Watershed: EPA is conducting a comprehensive project development and engagement process to assess and select the most effective projects to address transboundary water pollution issues in the San Diego/Tijuana region, pursuant to the US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) Treaty implementing legislation.
- US-Mexico Border 2025 Program: EPA Administrator and SEMARNAT Secretary signing of the new framework.
- US-Canada Program: Bilateral cooperation on the Great Lakes, Plan 2014, and transboundary mining issues.
- Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC): US, Canada, and Mexico implement new Strategic Plan.
- North American Development Bank(NADB): Represent EPA at NADB Board of Directors meeting in November.

## BACKGROUND:

EPA is the U.S. national coordinator on environmental issues along the U.S.-Mexico border with the signing of the La Paz Agreement in 1983. A series of binational plans have been signed that provide a framework for binational cooperation to address border environmental issues, the most current one is known as Border 2020. In addition, EPA has a Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF), a water infrastructure program to fund water infrastructure projects on both sides of the border that will benefit water quality in the U.S.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established by the 1994 North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and now ratified by the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) under the US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) free trade agreement. EPA worked with Mexico and Canada in the development of the 2021-2025 CEC Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the CEC Council on June 26, 2020. This new Strategic Plan represents a transition to the new USMCA and has reaffirmed CEC's key role in implementing key environmental provisions in the agreement. The EPA Administrator is the US representative on the CEC Council and the US currently chairs the CEC Council.

EPA and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) have a long-standing history of bilateral cooperation on environmental issues along the US-Canada border, including cooperation on mutual issues of concern under the US-Canada Air Quality Agreement, the U.S.-Canada Binational Toxics Strategy, and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In addition, EPA works with the State Department to address potential impacts of transboundary pollution that have been raised by US Congressional delegations, states and tribes, most notably from large scale mining in British Columbia. EPA has been very active in the US-Canada bilateral meetings chaired by the U.S. State Department which discuss issues of mutual concern such as the Great Lakes and transboundary mining.

The North American Development Bank (NADB) finances infrastructure projects along the U.S.-Mexico border to enhance the affordability, financing, long-term development and effective operation of infrastructure that promotes

a clean, healthy environment for the citizens in the region. These projects are reviewed and approved by the NADB Board of Directors, which includes representatives from EPA, Treasury and State Department.

#### KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☒ Congress      ☒ Industry      ☒ States      ☒ Tribes      ☒ Media      ☒ Other Federal Agency  
☒ NGO      ☒ Local Governments      ☐ Other (name of stakeholder) \_\_\_\_\_

#### MOVING FORWARD:

As a general matter, OITA is EPA's lead and will coordinate EPA participation in the implementation of programs and activities that address environmental cooperation and transboundary pollution in North America.

**Tijuana River Watershed:** The USMCA implementing legislation includes supplemental funding for the Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP) allocating \$300M to EPA for architectural, engineering, planning, design, construction and related activities in connection with the construction of high priority wastewater facilities to address international transboundary pollution from Mexico. EPA is working with eligible public entities, pursuant to Section 821 of USMCA, to develop assess, and implement infrastructure projects that provide comprehensive solutions to transboundary wastewater pollution in the San Diego/Tijuana River basin.

**US-Mexico Border Program:** EPA is working with our counterpart in Mexico, SEMARNAT, to launch a new version of the US-Mexico Border Program referred to as Border 2025. This program was developed in collaboration with state, local and tribal governments to address areas of mutual concern along the border.

**US-Canada Program:** EPA will continue to work together with Canada on shared watersheds like the Great Lakes and to address transboundary pollution that affects state and tribal communities in the U.S. Of particular interest are the transboundary impacts of mining activity in British Columbia that impacts stakeholders in Montana, Washington, Idaho and Alaska. Additionally, EPA continues to work with Canada under the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement on reducing air emissions and cooperating on priority research topics such as transboundary impacts and wildfire-smoke emissions.

**Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC):** As the CEC Council Chair for FY 2021, EPA will be working with Canada, Mexico and CEC Secretariat on a draft plan of activities that would address the priorities identified in the USMCA. Activities would include USMCA priority areas such as shared ecosystems and species; preventing and reducing pollution in the marine environments; and clean air, land and water.

**North American Development Bank (NADB):** The USMCA implementing legislation includes \$215M for the US share of the increase in capital stock to the NADB, which will provide funds to support financing of projects related to water and environmental infrastructure.

**Border Water Infrastructure Program (BWIP):** The Office of Water, Region 9 and Region 6 implement BWIP in partnership with the Government of Mexico *Comisión Nacional del Agua* (CONAGUA) and NADB. BWIP funds planning and construction activities for water and wastewater infrastructure projects on both side of the US-Mexico Border. Projects the EPA supports on the Mexico-side of the border must provide benefits to the U.S. Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations were \$25 million.

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: OITA

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: OW, OCSPP, OAR, OLEM,  
OGC, REGIONS 1,2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10